

minor surgeries and worked over 1,000 hours of ambulance service, where she was credited with helping to save the life of a gunshot victim. While at Eielson she found time to volunteer with the USO, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Air Force Sergeants Association, and youth cheerleading. Add to this her work toward a bachelor's degree in nursing, and it is clear why she stood out from her peers for this prestigious award.

Excellence is contagious. Rewarding the best of the best motivates others in their own endeavors. In a time when our servicemembers are all volunteers, the professionalism and proficiency of the force is fueled by those within the ranks who lead by example and uphold the core values of their service. The example Raven set through her exceptional performance has undoubtedly been transmitted to countless other airmen she served with. Alaska is proud to have had her.

Alaskans take pride in treating our military better than any other State, and we like to think our support makes them better soldiers, airmen, sailors, marines, and coast guardsmen. We know they make us better. Our military members are a reassuring presence in our communities, and we hope our faithful patriotism reciprocates the inspiration we draw from theirs. Raven has recently been transferred to Yokota Air Base, Japan, but I trust she will fondly remember her time in Alaska. I congratulate Sergeant Taylor on her selection as one of the 12 Outstanding Airmen, I thank her for her service, and I look forward to hearing of her continued success.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

FISCAL PLAN ENTITLED "LIVING WITHIN OUR MEANS AND INVESTING IN THE FUTURE" RECEIVED DURING ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2011—PM 22

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on the Budget:

To The Congress of the United States:

This continues to be a time of challenge for our country. We face an economic crisis that has left millions of our neighbors jobless, and a political crisis that has made things worse. Millions of Americans are looking for work. Across our country, families are doing their best just to scrape by—giving up nights out with the family to save on gas or make the mortgage, or postponing retirement to send a child to college.

These men and women grew up with faith in an America where hard work and responsibility paid off. They believed in a country where everyone gets a fair shake and does their fair share; they believed that if you worked hard and played by the rules, you would be rewarded with a decent salary and good benefits. If you did the right thing, you could make it in America.

For decades now, Americans have watched that compact erode. They have seen the decks too often stacked against them. And they know that Washington has not always put their interests first. Too often, our Nation's capital has been consumed by partisanship. Too often, the needs of special interests or politics have been put ahead of what is best for the country.

That is what must change. The American people work hard to meet their responsibilities. Now, as the Nation faces an economy that is not growing and creating jobs as it should, so must its leaders. While the continued recovery of our economy will be driven by the businesses and workers across our land, policymakers in Washington can take steps to help Americans right now and set the most favorable conditions we can for growth and job creation for years to come. We can live within our means and invest for the future.

That is why last week I presented to the Congress and the American people the American Jobs Act, to provide a jolt to the economy and give companies confidence that if they invest and hire, there will be customers for their products and services. This jobs bill will put more people back to work and more money in the pockets of those who are working. It will create more jobs for construction workers, more jobs for teachers, more jobs for veterans, and more jobs for the long-term unemployed. It will provide a tax break for companies that hire new workers, and it will cut payroll taxes in half for every working American and every small business. It will create jobs for people to rebuild our aging infrastructure and repair and modernize at least 35,000 schools. Moreover, the proposals in the American Jobs Act are the kind of proposals that have been supported by Democrats and Republicans in the past.

I am committed to paying for this jobs bill. The Budget Control Act that I signed into law last month will cut annual Government spending by about \$1 trillion over the next 10 years. It also charges the Joint Select Com-

mittee on Deficit Reduction with finding an additional \$1.5 trillion in savings. As part of this jobs bill, I am asking the Congress to increase that amount so that it covers the full cost of the American Jobs Act. In addition, I believe that the Congress should seize the opportunity that this new Committee presents and do much more so that we can put the country on a sustainable fiscal path, which is critical for our long-term economic growth and competitiveness.

For this reason, I am sending to the Congress this detailed plan to pay for this jobs bill and realize more than \$3 trillion in net deficit reduction over the next 10 years. Combined with the approximately \$1 trillion in savings from the first part of the Budget Control Act, this would generate more than \$4 trillion in deficit reduction over the next decade. This would bring the Nation to the point where current spending is no longer adding to our debt and where our debt is no longer increasing as a share of our economy—an important milestone on the way to restoring fiscal discipline and moving us toward balance.

This plan is a balanced one that asks everyone to do their part. It includes nearly \$580 billion in cuts and reforms to mandatory programs of which \$320 billion is savings from Federal health programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. These changes are necessary to maintain the promise of Medicare as we know it.

The plan also realizes more than \$1 trillion in savings over the next 10 years from our drawdowns in Afghanistan and Iraq. And the plan calls for the Congress to undertake comprehensive tax reform that lowers tax rates, closes loopholes, boosts job creation here at home, cuts the deficit by \$1.5 trillion, and observes the Buffett Rule—that people making more than \$1 million a year should not pay a smaller share of their income in taxes than middle-class families pay.

To assist the Committee in its work, I also included specific tax loophole closers and measures to broaden the tax base. Together with the expiration of the high-income tax cuts from 2001 and 2003, these measures would be more than enough to reach this \$1.5 trillion target. They include cutting tax preferences for high-income households, eliminating tax breaks for oil and gas companies, closing the carried interest loophole for investment fund managers, and eliminating benefits for those who use corporate jets.

In sum, the plan I am sending to the Congress today is a blueprint for how we can reduce this deficit, pay down our debt, and pay for the American Jobs Act in the process. I have little doubt that some of these proposals will not be popular with those who benefit from these affected programs. And some of these changes are ones that we would not make if it were not for our fiscal situation. But we are all in this together, and all of us must contribute